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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which New Hampshire schools are implementing advisory programs, as suggested by the Carnegie Council's "Turning Points" report. An advisory program is defined as a program within a middle school whereby students work with adults on an individual or group basis. Questionnaires on common practices used in advisory systems were completed by 16 middle schools that had advisory programs. Responses suggest that New Hampshire middle schools are attempting to meet the recommendations of the Carnegie Council's report. The findings suggest that, by using various forms of advisory programs, schools are meeting the needs of individual students during the transitional time of early adolescence. Based on the results of the survey, it is recommended that: (1) middle schools offer advisory systems to all students; (2) teachers, guidance personnel, and administrators who express an interest in the program be advisors; (3) support staff be considered for advisory responsibilities; (4) the administration and school board support the advisory concept; (5) advisory programs be well-planned; (6) advisory programs be permanently scheduled into the school day; (7) advisory programs do not become another add-on responsibility; (8) advisory programs be flexible; (9) a network be established among middle schools to share ideas; and (10) additional research be conducted into other aspects of middle schools. Included in this document is a brief synopsis of the content of advisory programs in the 16 schools. (NB)

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ED 365 918

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADVISORY PROGRAMS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE MIDDLE SCHOOLS

By
Bonnie Robinson

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Education degree in the
Department of Education
Plymouth State College
December, 1992

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Chapter I. Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The Carnegie Council, in its "Turning Points" report, points to the many needs of middle school students and makes recommendations to meet those needs. In an effort to create a community for learning, the task force calls for an advisory system so that every student will be well known by at least one adult within the school. Indeed, advisor-advisee programs are frequently cited as an important characteristic of true middle schools. This investigator will uncover and describe the various implementations of advisory programs within New Hampshire schools.

Need for the Study

The middle school movement has quickly gained momentum. Much of its development has happened within the schools, and continual documentation is vital to an understanding of current practices. While many schools recognize the usefulness of an advisory system, it can be difficult to plan and implement. The results of this study will not only provide additional data, but could lead to a network of resources within New Hampshire middle schools.

Hypothesis

The investigator is planning to uncover the current status of advisory programs within New Hampshire middle schools. In order to carry out this study, it is assumed that

- a valid questionnaire will be developed and used
- there are willing participants
- there are both time and resources to carry out the study
- interpretation of the data is appropriate to the study

As a result of successfully completing this study, the effect of advisor/advisee programs in New Hampshire middle schools will be revealed.

Method

This is a descriptive study which will examine the extent to which New Hampshire schools are implementing advisory programs.

The study will involve a cross sectional sampling of New Hampshire middle schools representing different geographical areas, rural and urban communities, and size of the schools.

A questionnaire will be developed by the investigator and juried prior to distribution.

In particular, the following objectives will guide the research:

- To uncover goals for advisory programs
- To determine what students are involved in advisory programs
- To determine which faculty are involved
- To determine whether other adults are involved
- To examine training procedures
- To examine such factors as size of group, selection of group, multi-grade and multi-age possibilities, whether a set curriculum is used, and frequency of meetings

Essential Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will apply:

Advisory Program - a program within a middle school whereby students work with adults on an individual or group basis

Advisor - the adult, trained or untrained

Advisee - the student

Chapter II. Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The middle school concept is so dynamic, it is no surprise that the documentation has lagged behind. Much of the development of programs has happened within schools. While summer institutes, organization of both middle level teachers and administrators, and research have been developed, it is difficult to keep pace with such a changing field. Indeed, even state standards to define middle schools have yet to be developed in New Hampshire. Hence, the research is scattered and incomplete, and yet what does emerge is a portrait of excitement. Teachers are filled with enthusiasm in the implementation of new ideas; they are creating the future within their own classrooms and teaching teams, and not only do their students benefit, but a myriad of opportunity results. The uniqueness of middle schools grows out of an understanding of middle school students as the programs, environment, and expectations are specifically geared with that student in mind.

This research moves from a look at the characteristics of middle school students, to an exploration of the history and evolution of the middle school itself. A deep understanding of both is vital to the proper use of the current available research and a meaningful implementation of middle school programs. Finally, the scope will narrow considerably to explore the range of interpretations of advisory programs currently being utilized with middle schools.

The Transescent

To define a middle school student, one must be prepared for a series of contradictions. Change appears to be the only constant in the years between 10 and 14, and adaptability is essential for any adult who hopes to reach them. The following traits are common in middle school age children [Berla, Henderson, and Kerewsky, P. 6,1989]:

- a high level of emotional and physical energy combined with long periods of "hanging out," and doing nothing productive by adult standards
- indulging in risk-taking behavior yet having feelings easily hurt
- a desire to be more independent from families and at the same time a need to be nurtured and protected
- being self-absorbed and craving privacy, together with great concern about being accepted by the group
- demanding privileges but avoiding responsibility, at the same time they are developing a deep concern about social issues and others and doing nothing productive by adult standards

The middle schooler, also referred to as a "transescent", is in the midst of dramatic changes in several areas: physical maturation is the most obvious, but change is also apparent in the social, emotional, and intellectual make-up of each student. [Arth, Alexander, Cherry, Toepfer, Eichhorn, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1982] To meet the developmental, physical, affective, and intellectual needs of transescence, a very special learning environment is required. The middle school attempts to meet those needs.

Middle School Origin and Development

Charles W. Eliot, then president of Harvard College, was the first to have a major impact on middle level education. [George, Stevenson, Thomason, & Beane, 1992] He became chairman of the Committee of Ten on Secondary Schools Studies, and found an answer to his complaints about the preparedness of incoming college freshmen by the committee's recommendation for six years of elementary and six years of secondary education. This finding prompted much discussion about the correct balance of secondary and elementary schools. Finally, in 1913, the Committee of Economic Time in Education made the first mention of a junior division within secondary education. [George, Stevenson, Thomason, & Beane, 1992] They recommended that schools would continue to build skills but also bring more depth to the curriculum. They valued guidance and exploration, independence and responsibility. Their vision would not be carried out for half a century.

The junior high was born! With enrollments increasing due, in part, to the number of immigrants, the junior high gained momentum. The original goals were lost as the junior high prepared students for high school which, in turn, prepared for college. Academic departments were formed, students were placed by rigid grouping patterns, and teachers and administrators found their junior high positions a kind of purgatory.

Reform came in 1961, when the ASCD published *The Junior High We Need*. The authors, Grantes, Noyce, Patterson, and Robertson noted that the contemporary junior high was a school with an identity crisis as severe as the students' it housed. [George, Stevenson, Thomason, & Beane, 1992] They recommended a new junior high where, among other things, one would find: flexible scheduling, teachers prepared for and devoted to the teaching of young adolescents, and richness in guidance programs.

William Alexander and others designed the move away from the junior high, but still in keeping with the 1961 recommendations, toward the middle school. The ASCD restated their goals within the new context in its 1975 report *The Middle School We Need*. [George, Stevenson, Thomason, & Beane, 1992] This report reemphasized the developmental characteristics of young adolescents, and the need to respond in appropriate educational ways. Unfortunately, that simple concept, is frequently lost in reality of public education.

By the late 1980s, a great deal of excitement had grown about middle schools. Increasing consensus developed about common characteristics of effective middle schools, and positive results were generated. Indeed, between 1970 and 1990, traditional junior highs declined by 53%, and middle schools increased by 200%. [George, Stevenson, Thomason, & Beane, 1992] A clearly emphasized, common philosophy had also emerged. The goals of many exemplary middle schools were perhaps best articulated in the Carnegie report, Turning Points: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century [1989] This report urged all middle schools to provide:

1. Small communities for learning within the larger school buildings (P. 37)
2. A core academic program for all learners (P. 42)
3. Success experiences for all students (P. 49)
4. Empowerment for teachers and administrators in making decisions about the experiences of middle grade students (P. 53)
5. Teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents (P. 58)
6. Improved academic performance fostered through health and fitness (P. 60)
7. Families reengaged in the education of young adolescents (P. 66)
8. Schools that are reconnected with their communities (P. 70)

Further research points to the implementation of these goals through the adoption of practices designed to meet the needs of middle school students. In fact, four major national studies completed within the last four years, all point to the growing middle school movement, and appear to be in harmony with one another. [George, Stevenson, Thomason, & Beane, 1992] The most common descriptors of the unique offerings within the middle school include: advisory programs, interdisciplinary team organization, common planning time, parent involvement and cooperative learning, among others. The focus of this study will concentrate on just one aspect of effective middle schools: advisory programs.

Advisory Programs

The transescent, in the midst of a physical, emotional, intellectual, and social whirlwind, has a special need for advisement. A single guidance counselor within a school of 300 or more students cannot possibly meet the needs of each. In keeping with the Turning Points concept of creating a smaller community within each school, and that each child will be well-known by at least one adult within the school, advisory programs often result.

There are many different aspects of advisor/advisee programs in place in middle schools today. These are:

A. Homebase programs- A group of students meets with a single teacher for a long period of time. The teacher-advisor works on school-wide activities in a "homeroom" capacity. [Wiles & Bondi, 1986]

B. Advisor/Advisee programs- A small group of students (10-12) meets with a qualified adult who may include teachers, administrators, and qualified para-professionals who function in an advisory role periodically. Both structured and unstructured guidance activities are carried out. [Wiles & Bondi, 1986]

C. Multi-age and Multi-grade programs- A student remains with his/her advisor throughout his years in middle school, resulting in a group of students representing each grade level.

D. Scheduling- Several options are utilized for frequency of meetings: every day, twice a week, twice a week, and twice a month are the most common choices [Grover, Peppard, Rottier, Martens, Gomoll, & Burke, 1989]

E. Training- In Service opportunities are sometimes available for advisors. Topics may include ideas such as groups dynamics, understanding transescents, and communicating with parents, among others.

F. Ground Rules- A limited number of basic rules are usually in place within each advisory group. Such rules may include, "No put-downs" or "No names of students or teachers will be used".

G. Goals- A variety of stated goals is usually in place for an advisory system. Different advisory programs take different directions. To demonstrate, these guidelines from the West Virginia Department of Education, in their Middle Childhood Guidance Program provides a philosophical rationale. Its goals are: [James, 1986, P. 39-40]

I. To assist students in the development of self-understanding and positive self-concept.

a. To evaluate personal beliefs in relationship to others.

b. To assess personal strengths and limitations.

c. To become aware of one's own personal approach to life situations.

d. To reorganize thought about one's self in line with significant body changes.

II. To assist students in the development of effective interpersonal relationships.

a. To refine communication skills.

b. To become aware of roles in heterosexual relations.

c. To continue to learn appropriate social skills relating to peers and significant others.

d. To increase cooperative behaviors in family interactions.

III. To assist students in the development of skills needed for effective decision making.

a. To assist students in identifying steps to effective decision making.

b. To increase awareness of one's own decisions in relationship to group decisions.

c. To assume responsibility for consequences of one's own decisions.

d. To gain awareness of how decision making relates to career explorations.

IV. To assist students in acquiring an awareness of their environment as it relates to to personal-social, career, and academic development.

a. To assist students in understanding how one's own interests and aptitudes now relate to future career choices.

b. To increase awareness of the vastness of the world of work.

c. To assist students in identifying and locating career information.

d. To increase awareness of the relationship of educational experiences in the world of work

Using this outline as a base, the Putnam County Middle School was able to design and implement an advisory program. [James, 1986]

H. Curriculum- A variety of topics and themes are explored in order to carry out the goals of advisory programs. In Arvada, Colorado, topics for their "Reach for the Heights" advisory program include: [James, 1986, P. 17]

Responsibility

Self-Concept

Friendship

Decision-making

Communication

Community

Safety

Life skills

Summer skills

In some schools, themes are used which progress throughout middle school. In Powder Springs, Georgia, themes include: [James, 1986, P. 32]

	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade
Sept.	Get Acquainted	Get Acquainted	Get Acquainted
Oct.	Test Taking	Study Skills	Study Skills
Nov.	Making/Keeping Friends	Decision Making	Caring
Dec.	Community Service	Community Service	Community Service
Jan.	Decision Making/ Peer Pressure	Substance Abuse	Decision Making
Feb.	Communication	Caring/Manners	Test Taking/ Careers
March	Who Am I?	Careers	Creativity
April	Getting Along with Others	Creativity	Family Relationships
May/June	Georgia	Problem Solving	High School Preparations

I. Procedures- Through a variety of methods, such as regular meetings, activities, contracts, and self-evaluation, to name just a few, advisory programs attempt to achieve their goals. Frequently, a topic is chosen for a given month, and an advisor plans his/her group time from a selection of possible activities.

A number of problems have been cited which undermine the success of advisory programs. They include: lack of advisor preparation, unwillingness by faculty to get involved in the program, lack of parental support, lack of scheduling time and flexibility, and programs that are poorly conceived, planned, and initiated. [Kaywell & Carroll, 1988] In addition, many advisory programs have required complete re-vitalizations at regular intervals. [Coglitore & Larson, 1989]

If schools hope to achieve to long-stated goal of meeting the needs of transescents, and aspire to adhere to the current goals uncovered by recent research, evaluation of advisory programs must continue.

Chapter III. Description of Procedures

A. The Subjects

In July of 1991, the New Hampshire Department of Education published the results of a survey it had completed the previous year. In that survey, sent to all middle and junior high schools in the state, it gathered data about existing programs, such as an interdisciplinary team structure, flexible scheduling, and other topics which are inherent to middle school philosophy. Of those schools which responded to the survey, twenty-four indicated that they had an advisory system in place.

To extend the research, this investigator targeted those twenty-four schools to learn more about what is happening within each advisory system. It should be noted that these schools represent a diversity in size, locations, and rural/urban environments. (See Appendix B.)

B. The Instrument

The investigator developed a questionnaire for use in this research. It consisted of a cover letter and three-page, thirty-item survey based on common practices used in advisory systems, and revealed by a review of the related literature. This questionnaire was designed to facilitate ease in completion, in the hope of a high return rate.

The questionnaire was jury-validated prior to mailing, and was sent in August 1992, to be returned by mid-October 1992. The questionnaire, both prior to and following jury-validation, as well as various cover letters can be found in the appendices.

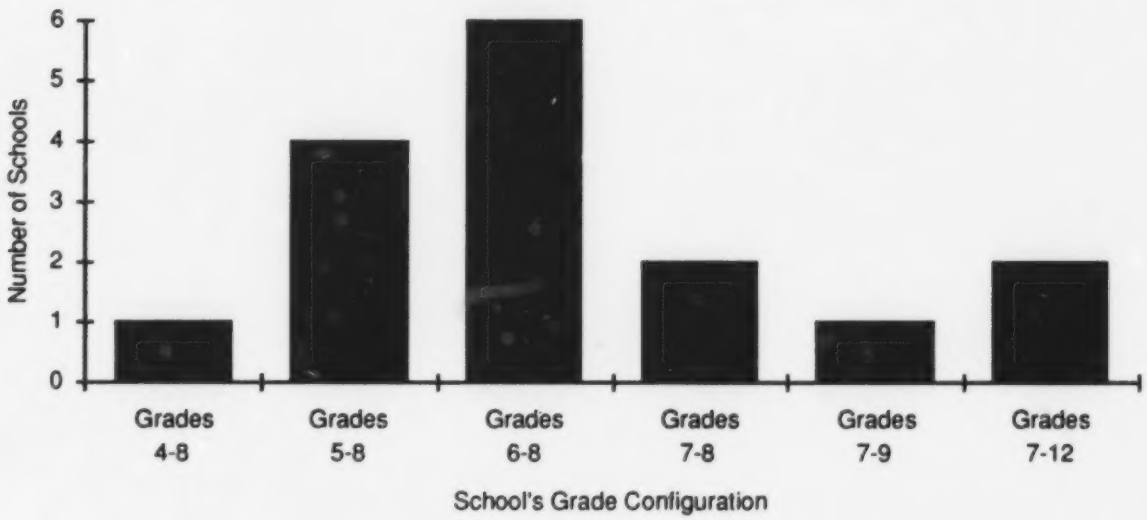
Chapter IV. Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Of the 24 schools surveyed, 16, or 67%, responded. The results of the questionnaire, are presented here in a format which includes discussion and tables.

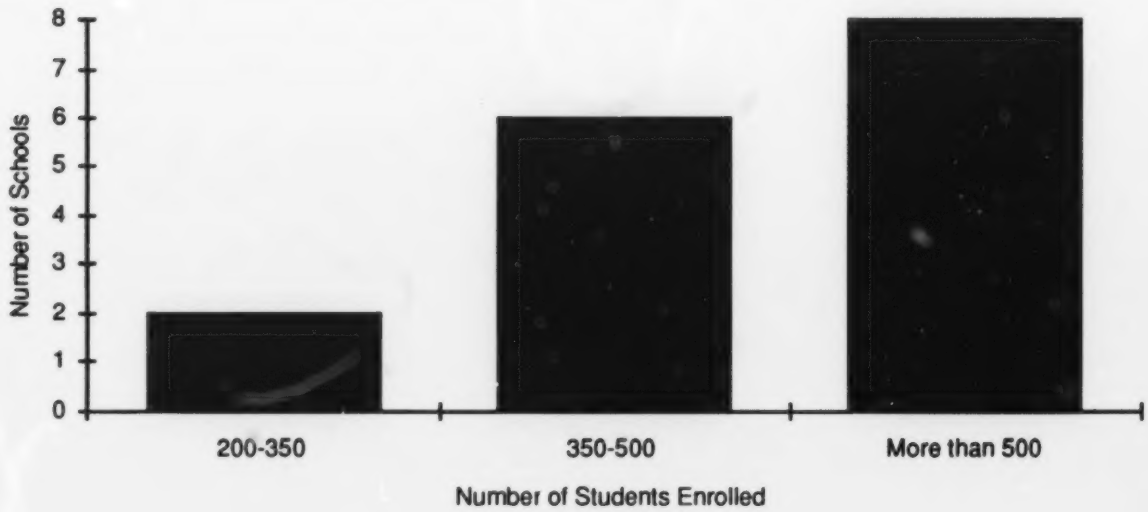
Findings

1. In 8 cases, the principal answered the questionnaire, 3 were answered by school counselors, 2 were answered by assistant principals, and 2 were answered by the guidance coordinators. In the last case, a teacher, with help from her Advisory committee responded.

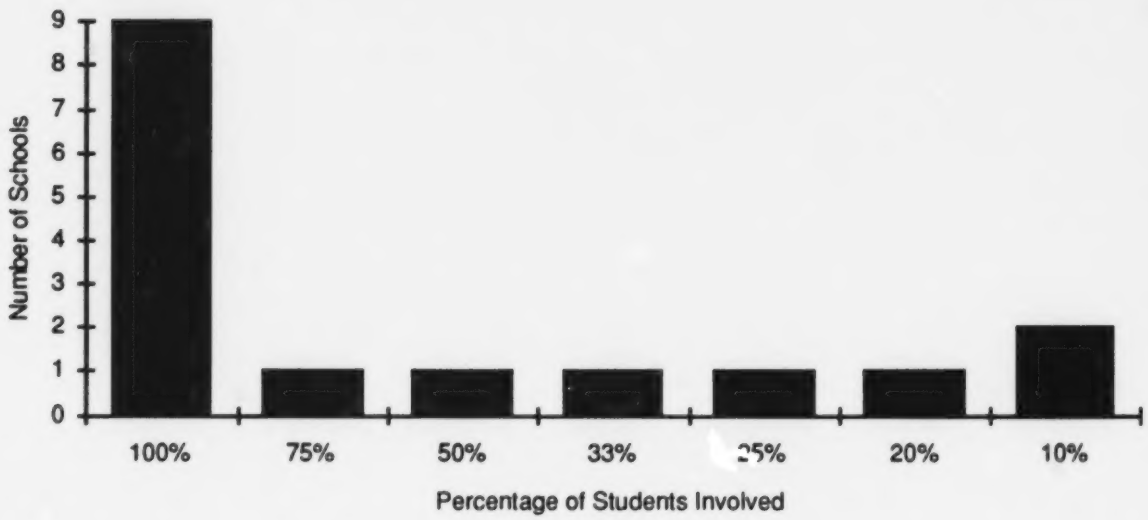
2. The following graph indicates the grade configurations of the responding schools:



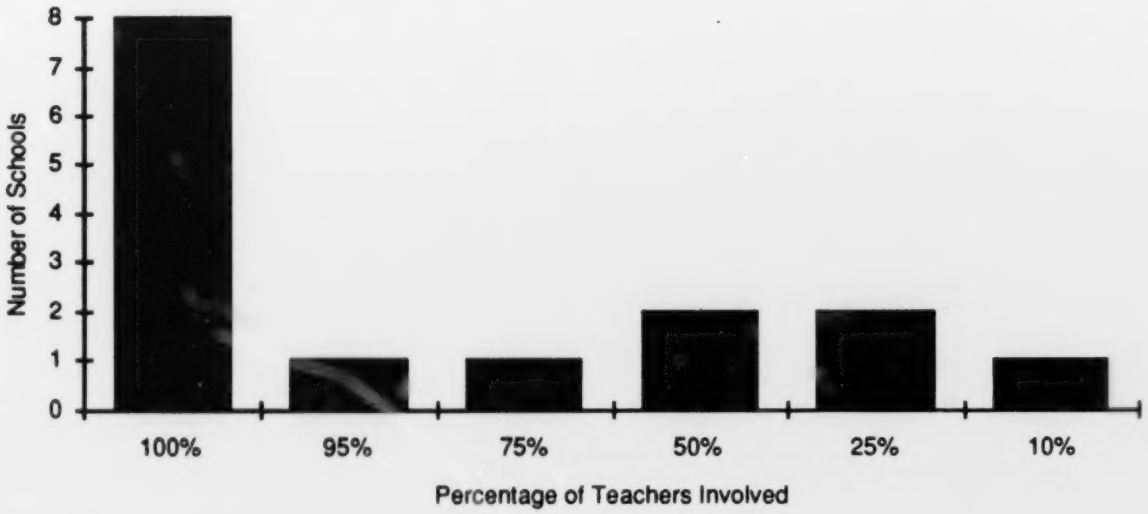
3. September 1992 saw the following attendance in the surveyed schools:



4. The percentage of students involved in advisory programs:



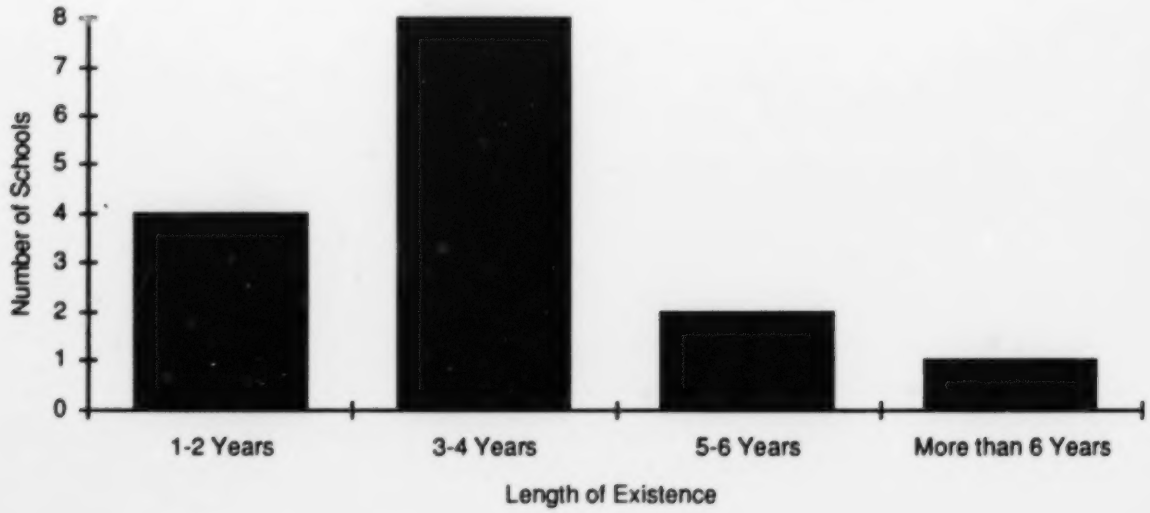
5. The percentage of teachers who serve as advisors:



6. Twelve schools indicated that other adults in addition to teachers serve as advisors. The roles of these other adults include:

Aides - 8 schools
Administrators - 7 schools
Librarians - 3 schools
Nurses - 2 schools
Counselors - 3 schools
Kitchen Workers - 1 school
Custodial Staff - 3 schools
Secretaries - 2 schools
School Psychologist - 1 school

7. This graph indicates the length of time the advisory programs have been in existence:



8. Various names are used for advisory programs, such as Advisory, Advisor/Advisee, Mentor Program, A-Okay, Home Team, and Group.

9. A clear majority of advisory groups meet every day:

Every day – 9 Schools
Once a Week – 4 Schools
Bi-monthly – 1 School
Twice in a 6 day cycle – 1 School
As Needed – 1 School

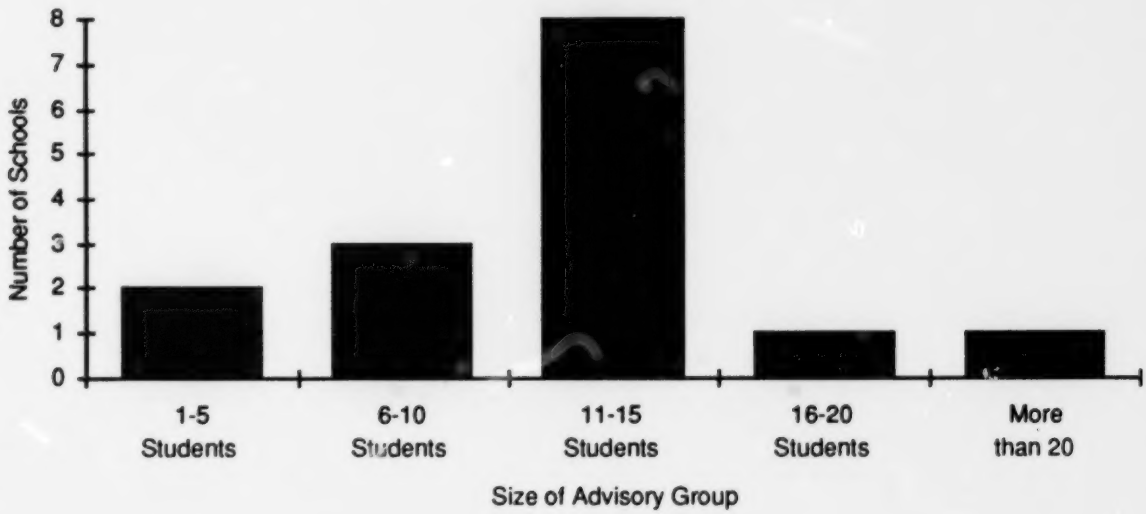
10. The length and scheduling of Advisory Period varies in each school:

8 minutes – every day
10 minutes – every day, 8:15-8:25 a.m.
10 minutes – every day
15 minutes – every day
15 minutes Tuesday- Friday; 30 minutes Monday
20 minutes – every day
20 minutes – once a week
20 minutes – once a week, lunch period
20 minutes – bi-weekly, six day cycle
25 minutes – once a week
30 minutes – every day
35 minutes – every day
40 minutes – every day
45 minutes – bi-monthly
45 minutes – once a week
As needed

11. On the question of how long students stay with their advisor, eleven schools indicated that it is a one year commitment. In two schools, the length of time is flexible. Another school has an advisory period of three months: April, May and June. In one school, advisees stay with their advisor for two years.

12. Eleven schools indicated that their advisory groups are composed of students from the same grade, and in five others, schools indicated a multi-age grouping.

13. The following graph indicates the various sizes of advisory groups:



14. According to the responses received in the questionnaire, these criteria are considered when forming groups:

- Selected from teams.
- 7th grade assigned as they enter school; option to change groups after 7th grade.
- Heterogeneous by ability, sex, sending school.
- Individual need, socio-economic mix, coding.
- Match between students and advisors, balance in genders.
- Choice.
- Random selection and a few students placed.
- Homerooms alphabetically by grade.
- In danger of failing.
- Developmental level, compatibilities, social skills, common interests, similar "at risk" profiles, advisor rapport.
- Random by grade.
- Random; homerooms divided into two groups.

- Heterogeneous by gender, town of origin, ability level. Homogeneous by grade level.
- Special characteristics such as parents divorcing, recent death of loved one, new to school.
- Students have until September 30 to choose their own advisor, but each advisor can only take 17.
- By considering various needs of students and strengths of advisors.

15. The training of advisors was an area of concern and was cited as a problem by more than one school. In fact, four schools indicated that no training has been offered. In others, advisors have received training in the following formats:

- Visitations to other schools.
- Speakers to address staff.
- Workshops and In Service opportunities.
- University of Maine seminar; NELMS workshop.
- Reading material and curriculum book.
- Explanations and expectations from guidance or a steering committee.
- Advisors are mentored by experienced advisors and administrators.
- Training in the QUEST program.

16. Who is in charge of the program?

Principal – 3 schools
Guidance – 5 schools
Coordinator – 1 school
Committee – 6 schools
No One – 1 school

17. Very few schools indicated that they have a set advisory curriculum. Four schools have developed monthly themes. RAP is available in two schools, and a variety of other sources is used in several others, but advisors pick and choose what will work best for their groups.

18. Eleven schools stated that they do not have community service as an aspect of their advisory programs, but some indicated that they are interested in developing this idea. Four schools do include community service projects, such as the organization of a Hurricane Andrew relief collection, and a "Me and My Neighborhood" theme. One school incorporates "Secret Friends" at the school level, separate from A/A. The advisory groups from another school are working closely with the Student Council in the planning of community service projects.

19. On the question of the topic of substance abuse, seven schools stated that they do not address this topic in Advisory. Of these seven, two indicated that this topic is incorporated elsewhere such as in Health class, or through H.O.P.E.S. Six schools indicated that substance abuse is sometimes included in advisory groups, dependent on advisee's needs and advisor's comfort level. In three schools, substance abuse is a theme. One uses scriptographic booklets to provide information to students in a group setting.

20. While six schools indicated that they do not, several schools indicated that they do have additional programs within their schools which cover some of the themes that might be used in advisory. These programs include:

DARE – 4 schools
SFA – 1 school
Second Start – 1 school
Here's Looking at You 2000 – 2 schools
Quest – 4 schools
Changes and Challenges – 1 school
H.O.P.E.S. – 1 school

21. Parents are not incorporated into Advisory systems in most schools surveyed, except to be informed or give permission for their child's participation in the program. One school listed parents as volunteers, and one other indicated that four parents serve on an Advisory committee.

22. The following methods are used in program evaluation:

Parent feedback
Teacher feedback
Student Feedback
Faculty evaluation at the end of the year
Surveys
Observations
Student success
Student involvement
Informally within teams
Advisor and advisee input
School atmosphere
Teacher satisfaction

23. The following themes emerged in citing program problems:

A. Advisor concerns:

- Periodic training would be helpful.
- Lack of staff prevents expansion to 8th grade.
- We are strapped by lack of staff.
- Responsibility for total experience of student.
- Lack of training of staff.
- Adult intimidation.
- Some adults reluctant to give time needed—already fully committed.
- Not enough time for teachers to give and receive support.
- More training for faculty.

B. Structure:

- We need a coordinator to stimulate the program.
- Still developing a clear vision of purpose, focus, and subsequent techniques.
- We need to expand it to all grade levels.
- What to do on Advisory day.
- Workload.
- Meaningful activities for eighth graders.
- Schedules.
- Communication.

C. Time:

- We begin late in the year.
- Needs to be built into schedule
- Time for planning
- Not enough time in the day—45 minutes would have been great, however...
- Length of A/A period.
- Time in the schedule.

24. The sixteen schools target these areas for improvement:

- To enable all advisors to better relate with their advisees.
- Advisor training.
- The development of a curriculum.
- ???We're pretty happy about what we're doing.
- Focus.
- Recent changes: monthly themes, shorter periods, meeting every day.
- Extend to all grade levels; need additional staff.
- A/A committee formed to take ownership of the program and establish direction.
- Timing.
- Consistent advisor support throughout the year. Offering at least two large group activities.
- Attitude. Citizenship.
- Training.
- Adult comfort/confidence. Planning time.
- Allow time in school day and relieve "volunteer" status.
- We need to find more time—working on it!
- More training. Regular meetings for support, planning, development of themes, and sharing ideas. More acceptance and support of program. Increased scheduled time. Better materials. More involvement in community.

25. One principal summed up what he considered to be the strongest aspect of his school's advisory program by commending what he called "the energy and wisdom of teachers". That theme was echoed in several schools:

- Strong interest and effort on the part of some teachers to develop a successful program. Administrative support of the philosophy. In the third year, students now realize the purpose. Teams are working together to plan activities. Students have daily access to a non-threatening adult advocate. Strong support from students and parents.
- Commitment by all the people involved.
- Those adults doing it really believe in the value of their efforts.
- School-wide commitment. Committee coordination. Emphasis on school pride.
- Everyone is commited and trying to make it successful.
- Advocacy.
- Advisor commitment.
- Personal interest of teachers.
- Teacher involvement with students. Increased parental contact.
- Small groups.
- Strengthening student/adult relationships.
- Small group discussion.
- Our ability to show kids we care on a very personal basis.

26. The questionnaire asked for a capsulated version of each school's goals, objectives, themes, and/or a time line. Since it is very difficult to generalize, a more specific analysis seemed appropriate. Here, then, is a brief synopsis of the content of Advisory programs in sixteen New Hampshire schools:

Barrington Middle School
John J. Freeman, Principal
Who is Involved: 20% of students and 25% teachers, plus two others.
Goals: Academic services, Service, Social Issues; Developing monthly themes.

Indian River School
Donna J. Largent, Assistant Principal
Who is Involved: 10% of students and 50% of teachers, plus three others
Goals: "At risk" students will have more individual time with a significant adult.

Hooksett Memorial School
Anne Mulligan, School Counselor
Who is Involved: 100% of students, Homeroom teachers.

Jaffrey-Rindge Middle School
Rovena Scribner Kipka, Director of Guidance
Who is Involved: 33 1/3% of students and 95% of teachers, plus most auxiliary staff.
Goals: All children will have one special adult in the school.

Weare Middle School
William Dupere, School Counselor
Who is Involved: 75% of Students and 75% of teachers, plus four others.
Goals:
Primarily: To have every student known well by at least one adult.
Yearly Themes: Last year was Careers, this year is Drugs/Alcohol, next year will be Community Involvement. Bill designs an agenda and timeline with possible activities for the year.

Keene Middle School

Roberta Barry, Guidance Counselor

Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers, plus many others.

Goals: "The advisory concept is a school-wide philosophy in which school staff members develop special relationships with all students to help them cope appropriately with the world in which we live. The 'Home Team' is a designated block of time to explore and expand the goals of understanding self, others, and life experiences."

Themes to include:

-getting acquainted
-teacher/group/team identity
-academic survival
-self-esteem
-responsibility
-decision making
-interpersonal relationships
-citizenship skills / good sportsmanship
-stress management
-future and career awareness
-grade 8 field trip (grade 8 only)

Londonderry Jr. High School

Nancy Meyers, Principal

Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers, plus 5 others.

Goals:

1. To give students a sense of belonging.
2. To assure that each student is known and knows one faculty member well.
3. To assist students with transition and adjustment issues at school.
4. To help students better understand themselves and their relationships with others.
5. To help students understand their relationships and roles in the school and community.
6. To help students take responsibility for themselves.
7. To help students to explore future educational and career opportunities.
8. To guide students with their study skills

Londonderry Jr. High School (cont.)

Units:

A. Orientation
B. Self-Concept and Self-Awareness
C. Relationships and Social Skills
D. Goals and Decision Making
E. Citizenship
F. Transition – Out
G. Study Skills

Milford Middle School

Harry Panopoulos, Assistant Principal

Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers, plus aides.

Pennichuck Jr. High

Ernest Mercier, Principal

Who is Involved: 10% of students and 25% of teachers.

Goals: To assist students who are in danger of failing.

New London Middle School

Tom Polisino, Principal

Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers, plus aides and administration.

Goals:

1. Academic excellence for all students.
2. One significant other to always be there.

Themes:

Organization; Cooperation.

South Meadow School
Howard Gilmore, Principal
Who is Involved: 50% of students and teachers.
School theme for the year:

Creating a cooperative community

School goals:

1. Have fun at what we do.
2. Attention to the curricula's on their appropriateness and implementation.
3. Continue to raise academic and behavioral expectations of students both in and out of the classroom.
4. Continue to develop means of informing the public and the school community of the positive contributions and successes within the school.
5. Cooperative/collective commitment of working together by staff to making South Meadow an excellent school.

Advisor/Advisee:
Seventh and eighth grade students in small groups (11-13) are provided time daily with a faculty member in a non-academic setting. The advisor/advisee group meets in the advisor's assigned area.

- Advisors meet with students and are responsible for monitoring their academic success and social/emotional welfare.
- Advisors meet once per cycle with team members to review student progress.
- Advisors will keep parents informed of student progress both academically and behaviorally.
- Advisors will be encouraged to continue to call and/or send a note to the parent of every student in their advisory at least once every two cycles.
- Every parent should be contacted by each classroom teacher/advisor within the first month of school.
- Advisors will conduct parent conferences at the end of the first and third marking terms.

Timberlane Middle School
Judith Deshais, Principal
Who is Involved: 25% of students and 10% of teachers, plus Guidance Counselors.
Goals: Help build self-esteem and coping skills.

Portsmouth Middle School
Holly Littlefield, Teacher, with assistance from the Advisory committee.
Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers.
Goals:
Mission Statement:
The advisor's role is a new responsibility of which a major part is to establish a positive relationship with each advisee.
The purposes of the Advisor/Advisee Program are several:

- to have every student known well by at least one adult is the school
- to give students a sense of "belonging" to their school
- to give students an opportunity, in a formal way, of dealing with issues and concerns related to their school experiences that are of concern to them
- to allow students an opportunity to suggest topics that might be discussed
- to afford students the opportunity to give feedback to their teachers in a non-threatening way about their school experience
- to establish a communications network with the students that is formal and permanently scheduled.

Sunapee Jr/Sr High School
Richard C. Leone, Principal
Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers, plus two others.
Goals: An advocacy program geared to:

1. Prepare students for life.
2. Develop responsible citizenship.

Wilton / Lyndeborough Cooperative Jr/Sr High School

Ernest Belanger, Principal

Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers, plus administration.

Statement of purpose:

Our school philosophy states that we believe the junior high school years are a transitional stage in the student's educational and personal development, and the high school years are a more intense investigation into various disciplines, while fostering social development. We also believe that a goal of the school experience is to encourage individuals to be productive, develop a sense of self-worth, and recognize the contributing role that each has in society. Furthermore, the school community must strive for self-improvement and the fostering of relationships based upon mutual respect.

Goals and Objectives:

1. To unify the bureaucratic, human relations, and political structure of the school for the students.
2. To give students a chance to express opinions about current issues.
3. To assist students in scheduling.
4. To provide a forum to discuss student/teacher expectations.
5. To assist students in self-evaluation and improvement.
6. To provide the faculty with the means to implement the assertive discipline program.
7. To give the faculty an opportunity to deal with the students' emotional needs.
8. To provide varied instructional strategies to ensure student success.
9. To provide a time period to relay messages and announcements to students.
10. To develop a respect for each other across the grades.

Kingswood Regional Middle School

Carolyn Wise, Guidance Counselor

Who is Involved: 100% of students and teachers, plus two others.

Goals:

The Advisory Committee believes that an advisory should serve four primary purposes:

1. To ensure that each child has a specific advocate and is known well by at least one adult in the school.
2. To introduce and reinforce interpersonal skills.
3. To help students improve their school success.
4. To help improve team and school identity and spirit and, therefore, to instill an appreciation of community.

Suggested Functions of Advisors:

1. Conduct orientation of students.
    a. Explanation of school and student schedules.
    b. Explanation of rules and policies.
    c. Completion of necessary forms.
    d. General: Locker combinations, lunch procedures, etc.
2. Contact parents.
    a. Introduction.
    b. Invite to school functions.
    c. Follow-up to absences.
    d. Follow-up to deaths in the family.
    e. Follow-up on grades.
3. Facilitate goal-setting.
    a. Grades.
    b. Behavioral.
    c. Social.
4. Conference grades with advisees.
    a. Setting goals for improvement.
    b. Analyzing obstacles.
    c. Following up on perceived errors. (Teaching self-advocacy.)
    d. Discussing parental expectations.
5. Systematize organizational skills.
    a. Locker checks.
    b. Recording of assignments.
    c. Daily check for preparation.
    d. Plotting of long-range assignments.
6. Provide opportunity for study.
    a. Assist with assignments.
    b. Facilitate peer review for quizzes and tests.
7. Build a sense of belonging.
    a. Birthday recognition.
    b. Pizza parties (lunch or after school).
    c. Collages and logos.
    d. After school gatherings (movies or tournaments).
    e. School or community service activities.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research, it is clear that New Hampshire middle schools are attempting to meet the recommendations of the Carnegie Council's *Turning Points* report. By using various forms of Advisory programs, schools are meeting the needs of individuals during the transitional time of early adolescence. Advisory programs combine a significant adult with a small group of students, and small communities of learning result. Support systems are ready, and communications networks are established. Teachers go beyond their specific disciplines, and take more of an interest in the whole child, while at the same time, sharing a bit more of themselves.

There is a limit, however, as to how many additional tasks a teacher/advisor can be required or even requested to accomplish. Too often, it would appear that Advisory programs are simply another thing, in addition to a full course load, homeroom responsibilities, duties, and committees. Teachers sometimes feel unprepared to branch into the realm of personal development, and are skeptical about its being required of them. They have nothing more to give.

The school day, and its limitless scheduling difficulties. presents another dilemma. To find even twenty minutes twice a week, often seems beyond possibility.

The emotional, physical, social, and intellectual changes of early adolescence must be addressed. Students between the ages of ten and fourteen have many serious developmental concerns. A formal setting, regularly scheduled, with a specific purpose and an adult who is properly prepared meets this need. Advisory programs should become a high priority in all middle schools.

Recommendations

1. All middle schools should offer Advisory systems for 100% of their students.

   These advisory groups should not exceed 15 in size, and should meet at least once per week. Students, with their parents, should give a full commitment to the program.

2. All teachers, guidance personel, and administrators who express an interest in the program should be advisors.

   Students are the highest priority, and Advisory programs are one way of assuring that they have both a sounding board and a voice. To call on volunteers to be advisors results in a fragmented school, and an unbalanced division of responsibilities, but it seems unproductive to require all personel to be advisors. Uncommited advisors will almost surely be ineffective. Therefore, incentives should be built in for those who would be advisors.

3. All support staff should be considered for advisory responsibilities.

   Secretaries, custodial staff, kitchen workers and aides, who choose to work in middle schools, are frequently child advocates. These para-professionals are a resource which should not be overlooked.

4. The administration and school board should be in full support of the Advisory concept before its implementation.

   Strong leadership is essential.

5. All Advisory programs should be well-planned in terms of goals, issues, training, scope, and ideas for activities.

No adult should be expected to be an advisor without the proper preparation and training. A committee of administrators, advisors, and parents should customize an Advisory program for their middle school, and use as many resources as possible to implement its success.

6. Advisory programs should be permanently scheduled within the scope of the school day.

7. Advisory programs do not have to be another add-on responsibility; rather, they can encompass many of the details of student life that are frequently lost in the shuffle.

Advisory time can be used for locker distribution, passing out and collection of notices home, groupings for school pictures, etc.

8. By design, all Advisory programs should be flexible enough to allow a myriad of interpretations.

It is important for advisors, with their groups, to choose their own path. An approach using monthly themes and a selection of activities allows for diversity within groups.

9. A network should be established among middle schools to share ideas related to Advisory programs.

There is collectively an enormous resource which should be shared and nurtured.

10. Additional research should be done into the implementations of other aspects of New Hampshire middle schools, such as flexible scheduling and interdisciplinary teaming.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Gantt Chart and Budget Projections

Gantt Chart:

Tasks	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Permission to Conduct Study	√					
Selection of Subjects	√	√				
Administering Study			√	√		
Data Analysis					√	√
Report Preparation						√
Binding of Report						√
Submitting Final Report						√

Budget Projections:

Copying	-$30
Postage	$20
Office Supplies	$25
Travel	$35
Child Care	$300
Total Costs	$410

Appendix B. Surveyed Schools.

Barrington Middle School*
Star Route
Barrington, NH 03325

Bow Memorial
20 Bow Center Road
Bow, NH 03304

Indian River School*
Box 169
Canaan, NH 03741

Claremont Junior High School
107 South Street
Claremont, NH 03743

Exeter Area Junior High School
Linden Street
Exeter, NH 03533

Franklin Middle School
200 Sanborn Road
Franklin, NH 03235

Hooksett Memorial*
1550 Hooksett Road
Hooksett, NH 03106

Hillsboro/Deering Middle School
School Street
Hillsboro, NH 03244

Jaffrey/Rindge Middle School*
107 Stratton Road
Jaffrey, NH 03452

Weare Middle School*
East Road
Weare, NH 03281

Keene Junior High School*
17 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431

Lisbon School
24 Highland Ave.
Lisbon, NH 03585

Londonderry Junior High School*
313 Mammoth Road
Londonderry, NH 03053

Hillside Junior High School
112 Reservoir Avenue
Manchester, NH 03104

Milford Middle School*
Osgood Road
Milford, NH 03055

Pennichuck Junior High School*
207 Manchester Street
Nashua, NH 03060

Kearsarge Middle School*
P.O. Box 2330
New London, NH 03257

South Meadow Middle School*
Route 202 North
Peterborough, NH 03458

Timberlane*
44 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH 03865

Portsmouth Middle School*
Parrott Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Sunapee Junior High School*
North Road
Sunapee, NH 03782

Wilton/Lyndeborough Middle School*
Burns Hill Road
Wilton, NH 03086

Thayer Junior/Senior High School
85 Parker Street Box 7
Winchester, NH 03470

Kingswood Middle School*
R.R. 1, Box 610 A
Wolfboro, NH 03894

*Responded to survey.

Appendix C. Cover Letter to Jurors.

Bonnie Robinson
R.R.1, Box 166D
Enfield, NH 03748
August, 14, 1992

Ellen Wilber
P.O. Box 622
Enfield, NH 03748

Dear Ellen,

As a partial fulfillment of my Master's Degree at Plymouth State College, I am conducting an independent research project into the implementations of advisory systems in New Hampshire middle schools. To this end, I have developed a questionnaire, designed to uncover significant aspects of advisory programs, which I include herein.

To establish credibility, it is important for this document to be jury-validated prior to its administration. Hence, I ask for your assistance in assessing this document. I include the research goals as well as a table of specifications. I will welcome your comments.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely Yours,

Objectives

Overall- To uncover the current implementations of advisory programs within New Hampshire middle schools-

Specifically-

1. To determine the program's structure.
    a. Which professionals serve as advisors?
    b. What is the history of advisory systems?
    c. What is the frequency of advisory meetings?
    d. Are advisory groups multi-age or multi-grade?
    e. How are groups formed?

2. To determine the scope of the advisory program.
    a. Are advisors trained?
    b. Is there a set curriculum?
    c. Are there other programs in place that augment the advisory program?
    d. What are the goals of the program?

3. To determine an acceptance/unacceptance of the program.
    a. Are parents involved?
    b. What are the strengths and weaknesses?
    c. How is the program evaluated?

Table of Specifications

Objectives	1	2	3
Item Type	3		
Alternative Response	10		
Short Answer		9	5
Total:	13	9	5

Appendix D. The Questionnaire Prior to Jury Validation.

Advisory System Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being used as a research tool, geared to uncover the current status and implementations of advisory systems with New Hampshire middle schools. It should be returned to: Bonnie Robinson, R.R. 1, Box 166D, Enfield, NH 03748.

1. Person Answering the Questionnaire:
2. Your role within the school:
3. Your school's name, address, and phone number:

4. What grades compose your school?
5. Number of students in attendance as of 1 September 1992:
6. Number of students involved in an advisory program:
7. Number of faculty:
8. Number of faculty who serve as advisors:
9. Number of other adults who serve as advisors:
10. Their roles within the school:
11. How long has your advisory program been in existence?
12. What is the name of your advisory system?
13. How often do advisory groups meet?
14. How long is advisory period?
15. Do students stay with their advisor for more than one year?
16. Are advisory groups composed of students from the same grade?
17. How many students are in your average sized group
18. What criteria are considered when forming a group?

19. Do your advisors receive any training? If so, what?

20. Who is in charge of the program?

21. Do you have a set advisory curriculum? If so, how was it developed?

22. Do you have as aspect of community service as part of your advisory curriculum?

23. Do you address the topics of substance abuse or sexuality within advisory groups?

24. Do you have other set programs (such as Quest) within your school?

25. Are parents involved in advisory groups in any way?

26. How do you evaluate your advisory program?

27. What problems do you cite regarding your advisory program?

28. What do you consider to be the strongest aspect of your advisory program?

29. Please list (or include) your program goals and objectives.

30. Please list (or include) a time line which indicates your program themes.

Any other comments:

Thank you.

Appendix E. The Jury

Ms. Karen Eames
85 Whites Bridge Road
North Windham, Maine 04062

Mrs. Heidi Proulx
18 Laurel Street
Concord, NH 03301

Miss Ellen Wilber
P.O. Box 622
Enfield, NH 03748

Mrs. Kathy Wilson
P.O. Box 13
Grantham, NH 03753

Appendix F. The Cover Letter that Accompanied the Questionnaire.

Bonnie Robinson
R.R. 1, Box 166D
Enfield, NH 03748
(603) 632-7811

Dear Colleague,

As a partial fulfillment of my Master's Degree at Plymouth State College, I am conducting research into the implementation of advisory programs in New Hampshire middle schools. In July of 1991, the State Department of Education conducted a survey to determine what characteristics of middle schools were being utilized throughout the state. Twenty-four of those schools who responded to the survey indicated they had an advisory system in place. Hence, I have targeted those schools for a more in-depth study. Your institution is one of these.

I would greatly appreciate your taking the time to respond to this questionnaire and return it to me by October 16, 1992. In addition, it would be helpful if you could also include any pertinent information, such as your school's philosophy, mission statement or the like.

My goal is to have completed the data analysis by December, and I will certainly send the results to you.

Thank you.

Most sincerely,

Appendix G. The Final Questionnaire.

Advisory System Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being used as a research tool, geared to uncover the current status and implementations of advisory systems in New Hampshire middle schools. It should be returned to: Bonnie Robinson, R.R. 1, Box 166D, Enfield, NH 03748.

1. Person Answering the Questionnaire:
2. Your role within the school:
3. Your school's name, address, and phone number:

4. Your school's grade configuration:

a. 5-8 b. 6-8 c. 7-8 d. Other: _____

5. Number of students in attendance as of 1 September 1992:

a. Less than 200 b.200-350 c. 350-500 d. More than 500

6. Approximate percentage of students involved in an advisory program:

a. 100% b. 75% c. 50% d. 25% e. Other: _____

7. Approximate percentage of teachers who serve as advisors:

a. 100% b. 75% c. 50% d. 25% e. Other:_____

8. Number of other adults who serve as advisors:
9. Their roles within the school:

10. How long has your advisory program been in existence?

a. 1-2 years b. 3-4 years c. 5-6 years d. Other:_____

11.What is the name of your advisory system?

12. How often do advisory groups meet?

a. Once a week b. Twice a week c. Every day d. Other:_____

13. How long is your advisory period?

a. 20 minutes b. 35 minutes c. 50 minutes d. Other:_____

14. How long do students stay with their advisor?

a. one year b. two years c.three years d. Other:_____

15. What is the composition of advisory groups?

a. All students from the same grade b. Multi-age; representing _____ grades

16. What size is the average advisory group?

a. 1-5 b. 6-10 c. 11-15 d. 16-20 e. More than 20

17. What criteria are considered when forming a group?

18. Do your advisors receive any training? If so, what?

19. Who is in charge of the program?

20. Do you have a set advisory curriculum? What resources do you use?

21. Do you have an aspect of community service as part of your advisory curriculum?

22. Do you address the topics of substance abuse or sexuality within advisory groups?

23. Do you have other set programs (such as Quest) within your school?

24. Are parents involved in advisory groups in any way?

25. How do you evaluate your advisory program?

26. What problems do you cite regarding your advisory program?

27. What areas do you target for improvement?

28. What do you consider to be the strongest aspect of your advisory program?

29. Please list (or include) your program goals and objectives.

30. Please list (or include) a time line which indicates your program themes.

Any other comments:

Thank you.

Appendix H. Postcard Sent to Nine Schools.

October 16, 1992

Greetings:

In early September, you should have received an Advisory System Questionnaire from me. At this time, I have received 62% and would like to include information from your school.

Will you please make an effort to complete your survey and return it to me within the next week?

Thank you.

Bonnie Robinson